

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

#### **LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of allocating traffic to ~~a path or~~ paths between a sending node and a receiving node in a network, wherein each message includes a QoS flag, the method including:

at the sending node, compiling a traffic status map of the available capacity on ~~the or each of plural~~ practical paths between the sending node and the receiving node with capacity available to handle a message with a given QoS level;

allocating said messages to one of said plural paths on the basis of its QoS flag, and the available capacity of the paths.

2. (Currently Amended) A method ~~as claimed in claim 1~~ of allocating traffic to a path between a sending node and a receiving node in a network, wherein each message includes a QoS flag, the method including:

at the sending node, compiling a traffic status map of the available capacity on each practical path between the sending node and the receiving node; and

allocating a message to a path on the basis of its QoS flag, and the available capacity of the paths, with-in which the QoS hierarchy allocates the highest priority messages being allocated to the shorter paths with available capacity in preference to lower priority messages, the lower priority messages being allocated to longer paths as traffic conditions require.

3. (Currently Amended) A method of allocating traffic ~~in a network substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings~~ to paths between a sending node and a receiving node in a network, wherein each message includes a QoS flag, the method including:

at the sending node, compiling a traffic status map of the available capacity on the or each of plural practical paths between the sending node and the receiving node, said paths including at least one path available to traffic of different QoS levels;

allocating a messages to a paths on the basis of said QoS flags and the available capacity of the paths, with a message of higher QoS level having preferential access to said at least one path relative to a message having a lower QoS level.